

home. A momentary tenderness?—or a
grudging bitterness at the capricious inequalities of
existence for warm
sheep and shivering goat, for the old man
running in the
blizzard and young beauty in its soft bed?
Both feelings,
I think, are present to the poet, a sense of
wrong and yet a
sense of beauty; as with his picture of
Pandora, that fair
bane of men.

Let us leave him there in the December
darkness,
falling early across the snows of Helicon.
Some may well
feel he was not worth so long a visit. To me
these poets
who have handled things, Hesiod the
ploughman and
Hardy the architect, are a relief after the
soft, white, un-
warlike fingers of writers who have never
wielded any-
thing sharper or heavier than a pen. It is
good to feel
underfoot the stones of this real Helicon, so
different from
the shadowy mountain of the poets' dreams.
To read the
Works and Days is to come back to the
land from the
hurrying futility of cities and see
silhouetted against an
evening skyline the straining team and bent
back of him
who bears up, patient Adas, the weight of
us and our
frivolities—the ploughman, the most
essential of us all,
yet paid the least, 'fl y a un plaisir bien
preferable & tout
cela; c'est celui de voir verdir de vastes
prairies, et croitre
de belles moissons; c'est la veritable vie de
Fhomme, tout
le reste est illusion/ Who wrote that? You
will never
guess. Voltaire. Unfortunately through

most of human
history the life of Piers Plowman has been
and remains
a poor and brutish business. Yet precisely
here lies the
lesson of Hesiod, and of that marvellous race
to which he
belonged—how marvellous, though he at
least knew*
Homer, was only to be revealed long after he
was gathered
to the dust of Ascra. Hesiod died in the
dawn of Greece,
Langland in the twilight of mediaeval
Christendom; both
ages have left immortal things to art; but for
the greatest